



Radio Amateur News & Views

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FOX HUNTING: TALK & DEMO The July 10th RANV Meeting

For our July meeting we dust off a topic which has been quiet for a while. Fox Hunting, also known as transmitting hunting, bunny hunting, T-hunting, direction finding, etc. is a topic which is often talked about but few can do well. It is a very important skill. Not only can you save lives by finding someone in distress, it is also handy to locate all sorts of noise sources plaguing amateur radio. Famed Fox Hunter Mitch W1SJ will be on hand to talk about and show you the various methods to ferret out the fox. This will be followed by a live hunt in the back 40 where several hidden transmitters will be set up. If the weather is bad, we'll just have the transmitters hidden inside the building!

Join us for the next **RANV** meeting, Tuesday, July 10th at 7:00 PM at the O'Brien Civic Center, 113 Patchen Road, South Burlington.

RANV PICNIC AUGUST 4th

Next month, our normal monthly meeting will be replaced by the **RANV** Summer Picnic. It will take place on Saturday, August 4th and will be held at Kill Kare State Park in St. Albans. Festivities get underway starting at 11 AM and run all afternoon.

RANV will supply park admission, soda and charcoal. You supply the rest! For those who are new to the picnic, major activities include eating and talking. There is also antenna stringing, working DX, calling CQ, yakking on the repeater and perhaps even some other interesting modes. We'll even have a Fox Hunt or two. There is also swimming, hiking, boating, volleyball and fishing. Eating appears to be the hands-down favorite!

Be sure to bring family and friends, food to eat and appropriate sporting goods **DO NOT** bring pets! Unfortunately, the park doesn't allow them, and it is too hot to leave a pet in the car. See you at the picnic!

COLCHESTER LIGHTHOUSE SPECIAL EVENT

by *Bob W4YFJ*

We are planning to participate in the National and International Lighthouse/Lightship weekend at the Colchester Lighthouse at the Shelburne Museum during August. All amateur radio operators are welcome to join us.

National Lighthouse/Lightship weekend is August 4-5th.

International Lighthouse/Lightship weekend is August 18-19th.

We will be operating from 9 AM- 5 PM each day from near the Lighthouse. The first weekend we will be on the second deck of the *Ticonderoga* and the second weekend, we will be operating from the shade trees near the Lighthouse. It should be a lot of fun!

I know that we have significant competition both weekends with the **RANV** picnic being held on the 4th and the St. Albans Hamfest on the 17-18th.

If you would like to join in any part of this activity, please contact me:

E-mail: rbrown@dps.state.vt.us

Home phone: 878-0590 non-work times

Work phone: 878-7111 (S-M 3-11PM, Th-F 7 AM-3PM)

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PACKET'S EARLY DAYS IN VERMONT

by Ben KIAUE

Some Packet Radio History

Digital communication techniques developed by Government and educational institutions (*i.e.* ARPANET and ALOHANET) were eventually codified in an International Standard known as AX.25 which defined a method of transmitting digital information over telephone lines. The basis of packet radio is the technique of breaking a message into packets which can be sent great distances and then reassembled to reproduce the original message. The first Amateur Radio Packet transmission took place May 31, 1978 in Montreal. Soon thereafter, a second Canadian group, the Vancouver Amateur Digital Communications Group (VADCG) developed a Terminal Node Controller in 1980. The two systems were not compatible. Enter Tucson Amateur Packet Radio, Inc. (TAPR). On June 26th 1982, Lyle Johnson, WA7GXD, and Den Connors, KD2S, initiated a packet contact with the first TAPR TNC unit. The project progressed from these first prototype units to the TNC-1 and then finally to the TNC-2 which is now the basis for packet operations worldwide.

Vermont Packet Radio History

I have talked with several people who were involved in the early days of Packet Radio in Vermont. This is what we remember. We cannot recall who made the very interesting presentation on Packet Radio in Burlington the fall of 1984. It may have been one of the Montreal packeteers or perhaps one of the Newport, New Hampshire gang who had a digipeater operating on 145.01 MHz from the tower on Mt. Ascutney. Anyhow, the presenter did a great job and convinced several of us to join the Tucson Amateur Packet Radio group which was beta testing a device called a Terminal Node Controller that would soon catch fire as the latest new fad in ham radio. I joined TAPR in October of 1984. Three BARC members immediately ordered TNC kits from TAPR: Roger WA1OZE, Walt N1CBT and Ben KIAUE. Others would soon follow. I was the first Vermont station to ping the WA1TLN-1 digipeater on Mt. Ascutney. That event was more exciting to me than my first Novice CW contact! My first 2-way contact was with Carl N1CB in Newport, New Hampshire. Two or three nights later I was joined by Walt and two way Vermont contacts were nightly occurrences. We were joined next by Roger and then Ralph KD1R and soon many others. Ralph operated mobile packet often relaying messages through my digipeater as well as others. His messages traveled faster and further than the ones sent at 65 MPH on the Interstate Network! Within a few months there were many packet stations heard at all hours of the day from Montreal, Ottawa, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts.

I introduced a Terminal Emulator program called Packet-Master at the 1985 Hamfest. The program featured hot-key access to several functions needed by packet experimenters, communicators, and traffic handlers, and was well received. I actually sold several dozen copies of this program. One of the earliest Packet Bulletin Board Station (PBBS) near here was WORLI-1 located in Westfield, Massachusetts. BARC had a digipeater on top of the Mary Fletcher Nursing School and a PBBS system. Emil N1GMU and Dave N1CPP operated PBBS stations as well. Ralph introduced a packet DX Cluster Server and hosted another PBBS.

My personal ham radio activity was suspended from about 1990 thru 2004. I have tossed most all printout from earlier times and the old brain box is getting better at forgetting things. Therefore, here ends my recollections of the past. For a more complete history talk to N1CPP or to KD1R, or any other of the old timers who shared in the experiences as helping the digital radio arts develop. Also check out www.tapr.org and the numerous links therein.

COMING UP!

With Field Day behind us, that's the first of the Big RANV events this summer. Don't forget to plan for the August 4th picnic in St. Albans.

There are a few other ham radio activities of note this summer. Next weekend, July 7-9th is the IARU HF Championship. This is a shortened summertime DX contest, running from 8 AM Saturday to 8 AM Sunday.

On the very next weekend after that, July 14-15th is the CQ World-wide VHF Contest. This runs from 2 PM Saturday until 5 PM Sunday and only 6 and 2 meters are used. Find yourself a high spot and be competitive on the two bands!

This summer we have an on-air event as we put Colchester Lighthouse on the air on two weekends (4-5th, 18-19th) in August.

August is Hamfest Time! That's when the St. Albans ARC holds their hamfest. This year's event is a two day show running from 11 AM Friday, August 17th until 5 PM Saturday August 18th at the Franklin County Field Days in Swanton.

Contacting RANV

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Please send submissions for the newsletter to the editor, W1SJ.

FIELD DAY - WE NAILED IT AGAIN!

by Mitch WISJ

Each year as I plan Field Day, I think, "how do we top last year's bash?" With 22 years of planning the RANV and previously the SJRC Field Day, with 5 first place finishes and most of the rest in the top ten, the bar gets higher each year. For the big change this year, we revamped the GOTA station with an antenna setup most groups would be proud of. But there were other challenges. Putting up a bigger tower was relatively easy. Finding the raw recruits to operate it was another matter. Even recruiting

for our main line phone and CW

stations was tough with 2 operators out of the area and several others unavailable. But Field Day is not about making excuses. The successful groups nail it year after year, no matter what the problems are.

We've always had a well organized setup plan. This year we backed it up with enough personnel to get the job done in a reasonable amount of time. While one crew put up the cw tower, the other put up the GOTA tower. When they were both finished, one crew worked on the phone tower and the other worked on the canopy and tents. By 7:00, most of the site was built, leaving plenty of time to shoot errant arrows into trees to hoist up dipoles. To make a long story short, we were ready to rock n' roll at the 2:00 start.

I was very worried about that start. Propagation sucked. I can't say it any nicer, because it wasn't pretty. After we put up the yagis on Friday, I made a few contacts and all were very, very weak. As I tuned around on Saturday afternoon prior to the start, I heard weak signals and a lot of power line noise. The forecast from WWV wasn't good: record low solar flux and very high "A" index,

meaning geomagnetic instability and lots of noise. It was promising to be a loooooong weekend.

And then something magical happened. Everyone called us! At least it seemed that way. Crappy propagation managed to produce almost 200 contacts on phone in the first hour. I think that the conditions were so awful that most stations sought out the strongest signals on the band and fortunately, we were one of them. As the afternoon wore on, things got better and we found

last 40 minutes. So while we didn't hit the dizzying rates we had last year on phone, it was the second best ever as CW shone and set a high water mark.

The GOTA station had lots of operators, lots of kids and lots of people interested in ham radio. This is a far cry from 2 years ago where Carl literally had to kidnap a kid crossing the street and put him on the air! Between Carl's letter writing and my telephone pestering, we had a full slate of operators. On the down side,

getting these operators up to speed on

crowded Field Day bands was almost a Herculean task. We got spoiled by some tremendous GOTA performances last year which was not equaled by the inexperienced crew. That and some nagging technical issues will give us lot to ponder to improve next year's event.

We got all the bonuses, we had elected representatives visiting us and for the piece of resistance, Andy Potter from WCAX TV News produced a 2 minute piece for the Sunday night and Monday morning news which was a real class act. The clip can be viewed on the RANV web.

Of course, we won't know how we will place in the scoring until next November. But in terms of overall measurement, I would have to say that this year's Field Day was an unqualified success!

The 2007 RANV Field Day Crew:
AA1SU AB1DD AK1H K1JCM K1KD
K1SVT KB1FRW KB1KBY KB1KPO
KB1KXF KB1LIF KB1MAQ KB1MDA
KB1MDC KB1NHQ KB1OAH KB1OOX
N1BQ N1UR N1YD N1ZUK W1DEB
W1EAT W1MOT W1RFM W1SJ W1UT
W4YFJ WT1L

"Field Day is not about making excuses. The successful groups nail it year after year, no matter what the problems are."

ourselves actually ahead of last year's spectacular rate. I don't know how we got there, but I wasn't complaining. Meanwhile, the operators on CW weren't exactly relaxing either as they forged ahead of their personal best. It was glorious!



W1DEB Operating - a rare photo!

What the prop gods giveth, the prop gods also taketh away! We had great hours on 20, 40 and 80 meters, but then "bam!" it all came to a screeching halt. Signals on 80 meters dropped, the noise hit S-9 and the rates went into tank. We couldn't buy a contact, and trust me, I was offering cash money! Sunday morning the rates recovered, but we only had a big 15 meter opening in the



FIELD DAY 2007!

**NEXT MEETING:
“Fox Hunting”
Tuesday, July 10th 7 PM
O’Brien Civic Center**

**RANV SUMMER PICNIC
Saturday, August 4th
Kill Kare State Park,
St. Albans**

RANV

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